Chapter 2

Command

The criterion by which a commander judges the soundness of his own decision is whether it will further the intentions of the higher commander.

FM 100-5, *Operations*, 1944

Command is personal. In Army regulations and doctrine, an individual, not an institution or group, commands. Only the commander has total responsibility for what the command does or fails to do. **How a commander exercises command varies with the characteristics of that commander**. All officers have strengths and weaknesses, abilities and shortcomings that affect how they command. The basic techniques of command do not change or expand with the increase in complexity of the force. However, direct leadership within command decreases as the level of command increases, and applying organizational leadership as described in FM 22-100 becomes more relevant.

NATURE OF COMMAND

To command is to do more than carry out orders and apply rules and regulations to the ebb and flow of military administration. Command calls for a creative act, spawned by a carefully carved vision of one's mission and professional values. Great commanders have the confidence and courage to interpret rules and orders, and to put their personal stamp on the decisions guiding their force....

Roger Nye, *The Challenge of Command*

2-1. The nature of command includes its definition, its elements, and the principles of command. The definition follows, and the following sub-sections discuss the elements and principles. The definition establishes the commander's authority and states the two great responsibilities of command. Implicit in these responsibilities are the elements of command. The principles of command discuss how to use the elements of command to fulfill the responsibilities.

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2-2. *Command* is the authority that a commander in the military service lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources for planning the employment of, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling military forces for the accomplishment of assigned missions. It also includes responsibility for health, welfare, morale, and discipline of assigned personnel (JP 0-2).

ELEMENTS OF COMMAND

2-3. The elements of command are authority, decisionmaking, and leadership. The definition of command refers explicitly to *authority*. It implicitly requires *decisionmaking* (effectively using available resources for achieving a future state or mission), and *leadership* (providing for the health, welfare, morale, and discipline responsibilities of command). Decisionmaking and leadership make up the art of command.

2-4. Commanders strive to use their authority with firmness, care, and skill. Commanding at any level is more than simply leading soldiers and units and making decisions. It is the interaction of these elements that characterizes command. Commanders who understand each element conceptually and how it interacts with the others—skillfully balancing them in practice—are much more effective than those who do not.

2-5. Consequently, successful commanders achieve a balance among the elements and develop skill in each one. They delegate authority to subordinates for those functions in which they cannot participate fully; however, they participate enough to assure their successful execution. Officers prepare for higher command by developing and exercising their skills when commanding at lower levels.

Authority

2-6. The Constitution establishes the Armed Forces, designates the President as their Commander-in-Chief, and empowers Congress to provide funding and regulations for them. Public law, such as the *Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)*, grants further authority, responsibilities, and accountability to commanders in all Services. Army regulations establish the authority, responsibilities, and accountability for Army commanders.

2-7. ***Authority* is the delegated power to judge, act, or command.** It involves the right and freedom to use the power of command and to enforce obedience under criminal law. This authority to enforce orders by law if necessary is one of the key elements of command and distinguishes military commanders from civilian leaders and managers. However, commanders have another source of authority: personal authority. Personal authority reflects influence and charisma. It stems from values, attributes, personality, experience, reputation, character, personal example, and tactical and technical competence. Personal authority, freely granted to a commander by subordinates, ultimately arises from the actions of the commander, and the trust and confidence generated by these actions. It is often more powerful than legal authority. Authority has three components:

- Responsibility.
- Accountability.
- Delegation.

2-8. **Responsibility.** With authority comes *responsibility*, the obligation to carry forward an assigned task to a successful conclusion. With responsibility goes authority to direct and take the necessary action to ensure success (JP 1-02). Commanders assume legally established and moral obligations, both for their decisions and for the actions, accomplishments, and failures of their units. Commanders have three major responsibilities: Above all, commanders are responsible for accomplishing all assigned missions. Second, they are responsible for their soldiers—their health, welfare, morale, and discipline. Finally, they are responsible for maintaining and employing the resources of their force. In most cases, these responsibilities do not conflict; however, the responsibility for mission accomplishment can conflict with responsibility for soldiers. In an irreconcilable conflict between the two, including the welfare of the commander himself, mission accomplishment must come first. Commanders try to keep such conflicts to an absolute minimum.

2-9. **Accountability.** Another corollary of authority is *accountability*: the requirement for commanders to answer to superiors (and finally the American people) for mission accomplishment, for the lives and care of their soldiers, and for effectively and efficiently using Army resources. It also includes the obligation to answer for properly using delegated authority. In turn, the subordinates are accountable to their commander for fulfilling their responsibilities.

2-10. **Delegation.** To accomplish a mission or assist in fulfilling their responsibilities, commanders may *delegate authority* to subordinates, including staff officers. Delegation allows subordinates to decide and act for the commander or in his name in specified areas. While commanders can delegate authority, they cannot delegate responsibility. Subordinates are accountable to their commanders for the use of delegated authority, but commanders remain solely responsible and accountable for the actions over which subordinates exercise delegated authority. There are several ways to delegate authority: among them, authority over a field of interest or technical specialty, a geographic area, or specific kinds of actions. Commanders may limit delegating authority in time, or they may use a standing delegation.

Decisionmaking

2-11. ***Decisionmaking* is the process of selecting a course of action as the one most favorable to accomplish the mission**. This decision can be deliberate, using the military decisionmaking process (MDMP) and a full staff, or it can be done very quickly by the commander alone. During operations, deliberate decisions usually are disseminated as fully developed written orders; less deliberate decisions are disseminated as fragmentary orders (FRAGOs). Deciding includes knowing *if* to decide, then *when* and *what* to decide, and understanding the consequences. Decisions are how commanders translate their vision of the end state into action. There are two ways to make decisions: analytic and intuitive.

2-12. **Analytic Decisionmaking.** The traditional view is that decisionmaking is a structured, analytic process based on generating several alternative solutions, comparing these solutions to a set of criteria, and selecting the best course of action (COA). The analytic approach aims to produce the optimal solution to a problem from among those solutions identified. It emphasizes analytic reasoning processes guided by experience, and it is used when time is available. It serves well for decisionmaking in complex or unfamiliar situations. This approach has the following advantages. It—

- Is methodical and allows the breakdown of tasks into recognizable elements.
- Ensures commanders consider, analyze, and evaluate all relevant factors, employing techniques such as war-gaming.
- Provides a methodology when the decision requires great computational effort.
- Provides a good context for decisions, especially for explanations.
- Helps resolve conflicts among COAs.
- Gives inexperienced personnel a methodology to replace their lack of experience.

Analytic decisionmaking is time-consuming but produces an optimal, more fully coordinated plan. It is not appropriate to all situations, especially decisionmaking during execution. The Army's analytical approach is the MDMP. (See FM 5-0.)

2-13. **Intuitive Decisionmaking.** The other way commanders make decisions is intuitive decisionmaking. ***Intuitive decisionmaking*** **is the act of reaching a conclusion which emphasizes pattern recognition based on knowledge, judgment, experience, education, intelligence, boldness, perception, and character. This approach focuses on assessment of the situation vice comparison of multiple options** (Army-Marine Corps). It focuses on assessing the situation rather than comparing multiple COAs. It is used when time is short or speed of decision is important. It relies on the experienced commander's (and staff officer's) intuitive ability to recognize the key elements and implications of a particular problem or situation, reject the impractical, and select an adequate COA to solve the problem. Intuitive decisionmaking replaces methodical analysis of options with assessment, obtains a satisfactory solution rather than an optimal one, and uses analysis to refine the decision. It is faster than the analytic decisionmaking and facilitates being the one who decides and acts quicker. The MDMP performed in a time-constrained environment relies heavily on the concepts of intuitive decisionmaking. Finally, it leverages the collaborative capabilities of information technology. Intuitive decisionmaking does not work well when the situation includes inexperienced commanders, complex or unfamiliar situations, or COAs that appear to be equally valid.

2-14. Intuitive decisionmaking substitutes application of the art of command for missing information. It works well when acting in uncertain situations and significantly speed up decisionmaking. Intuition in this context is the insight or immediate understanding that rapidly dismisses impractical solutions and moves to a feasible COA. This "art" comes from a combination of the commander's experience, training, and study.

2-15. In practice, the two approaches rarely exclude each other. In fact, commanders can use MDMP training to develop intuitive skills in themselves and their staffs. Each approach has strengths and weaknesses. Selecting one over the other depends primarily on the experience of the commander and staff, and how much time and information are available. The analytic approach is more appropriate when enough time and information are available to choose among different COAs, or when the staff is inexperienced. The majority of tactical decisions during execution—made in the fluid, changing conditions of war, when time is short and information is lacking or doubtful—will be intuitive. Commanders choose a decisionmaking technique based on the situation. It is a mistake to use intuitive decisionmaking when time and circumstances favor analytic decisionmaking. It is also an error to attempt to use analytic decisionmaking when circumstances do not permit it.

2-16. Commanders may base intuitive decisions during execution on the situational understanding developed during a preceding MDMP. Staffs may use part of the MDMP, such as war-gaming, to verify or refine a commander's intuitive decision, if time permits. When commanders employ the MDMP in a time-constrained environment, many of the techniques used, such as choosing to focus on only one COA, depend on intuitive decisions. Even in the most rigorous analytic decisionmaking, intuitive decisions help set boundaries for the analysis and fill information gaps.

2-17. Even in the best circumstances, commanders are unlikely to have perfect knowledge of the situation. They must often bridge the gap between what they know at the time of the decision with a feel for the battle. Intuition is the ability to understand the important aspects of a situation without evident rational thought and inference. Clausewitz described intuition as "the quick recognition of a truth that the mind would ordinarily miss or would perceive only after long study and reflection." It starts with the range of experiences and reflections on similar occurrences by commanders in the course of their development. It builds on the knowledge of the experiences of others gained through the study of military history. Intuition provides insight that rapidly dismisses impractical solutions and moves to a feasible COA. Intuition allows the commander to "read" the battlefield and do the right thing—faster, more accurately, and more decisively than the enemy. In battle, intuition includes insight into what the enemy is probably going to do and playing that propensity against him.

2-18. Intuition does not automatically reject logical analyses. Commanders can receive too much information and advice, or perceive they have not received enough. Intuition helps commanders select the relevant information (RI) if they have received too much. It allows them to avoid "information paralysis" and make a timely decision by filling in information gaps.

2-19. Decisionmaking involves applying both science and art. Many aspects of military operations—movement rates, fuel consumption, weapons effects—can be reduced to numbers and tables. They belong to the science of war. Other aspects—the impact of leadership, complexity of operations, and uncertainty about the enemy—belong to the art of war. Successful commanders focus the most attention on those decisions belonging to the art of war. They express their decisions as a statement of a goal or end state for the action (an

objective), a way to achieve the goal (a concept), and an allocation of means (resources) to tasks.

Leadership

2-20. *Leadership* is **influencing** people—by providing purpose, direction, and motivation—while **operating** to accomplish the mission and **improving** the organization (FM 22-100). It is the most important element of combat power. As the senior leader of the command, the commander directly applies that element of combat power. Subordinate commanders and small unit leaders reinforce it. (See FM 22-100).

2-21. There are two traditional philosophies of leadership: authoritarian or directing, and persuading or delegating. While authoritarian leadership may produce rapid obedience and even short-term gain, it can also develop subordinates who depend too much on the leader, require continuous supervision, and lack initiative. It can also fail to develop teamwork among subordinates. Persuasive leadership teaches subordinates not only to accept responsibility but also to actively seek it. Over time, it produces subordinates who exhibit a high degree of independence, self-discipline, and initiative. A commander's personality, values, attributes, skills, and actions drive his leadership philosophy and style. The mix of styles may also depend on the situation and the capabilities of subordinate commanders.

2-22. Battle command pits the leadership (decisionmaking, stamina, and willpower) of Army commanders against enemy commanders. (See chapter 4.) Army commanders aim to confront the enemy with three choices: surrender, withdraw, or die. Having the legal authority of command and issuing orders will not suffice in battle. The leadership of commanders ultimately includes their will. As Clausewitz stated:

> *As each man's strength gives out, as it no longer responds to his will, the inertia of the whole gradually comes to rest on the commander's will alone.*

PRINCIPLES OF COMMAND

> *There will be neither time nor opportunity to do more than prescribe the several tasks of…subordinates.... [I]f they are reluctant (afraid) to act because they are accustomed to detailed orders…—if they are not habituated to think, to judge, to decide, and to act for themselves in... their several echelons of command—we shall be in sorry case when the time of "active operations" arrives.*
>
> Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King
> CINCLANT Serial 053, 21 Jan 1941

2-23. Commanders use the principles of command to guide how they employ elements of command to fulfill their fundamental responsibilities of command: mission accomplishment and people. Figure 2-1 graphically relates these responsibilities to the principles of command.

2-24. A commander's use of the principles of command must fit the requirements of the situation, his own personality, and the capability and understanding of his subordinate commanders. Command cannot be stereotyped.

Moreover, the command principles and applying mission command must guide and stay abreast of the capabilities of emerging technology.

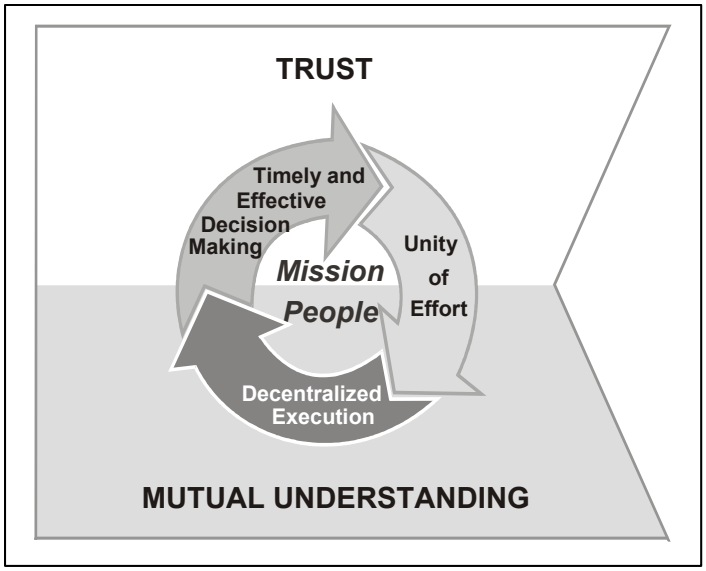


Figure 2-1. Command

2-25. Mission command reconciles the absolute requirement for unity of effort at all levels with decentralization of execution by emphasizing the commander's intent. Decentralization of execution is sustained by and contributes to timely and effective decisionmaking through subordinates' initiative. Mission command can only work in an environment of trust and mutual understanding. Mission command provides a common baseline for command not only during operations but also in peacetime activities. To employ mission command successfully during operations, units must understand, foster, and frequently practice the principles of command during training. Indeed, using command principles during peacetime overcomes institutional obstacles to mission command. The principles of command apply to all levels of command.

Ensure Unity of Effort

2-26. ***Unity of effort*** **is coordination and cooperation among all military forces and other organizations toward a commonly recognized objective, even if the forces and nonmilitary organizations are not necessarily part of the same command structure.** Under mission command, commanders give a clear commander's intent to provide sense of purpose and achieve unity of effort within the force. The commander's intent provides a focus for separate but coordinated efforts by subordinates. It describes the limits of the decisionmaking authority the commander has delegated to them. Designating priorities in operations also aids unity of effort and is part of the commander's intent. Failure to achieve unity of effort leads to confusion and missed opportunities; the effects can be catastrophic.

2-27. The commander's intent provides a unifying idea that allows decentralized execution within an overarching framework. It provides guidance within which individuals may exercise initiative to accomplish overall goals.

Understanding the commander's intent two echelons up further enhances unity of effort while providing the basis for decentralized decisionmaking and execution. Subordinates aware of the commander's intent are far more likely to exercise subordinates' initiative in unexpected situations. Under mission command, subordinates have an absolute responsibility to fulfill the commander's intent.

> *I suppose dozens of operation orders have gone out in my name, but I never, throughout the war, actually wrote one myself. I always had someone who could do that better than I could. One part of the order I did, however, draft myself—the intention. It is usually the shortest of all paragraphs, but it is always the most important, because it states—or it should—just what the commander intends to achieve. It is the one overriding expression of will by which every-thing in the order and every action by every commander and soldier in the army must be dominated. It should, therefore, be worded by the commander, himself.*
>
> Field Marshal Sir William Slim,
> *Defeat Into Victory*

2-28. Unity of command is the Army's preferred method for achieving unity of effort. Commanders always adhere to unity of command when task-organizing Army forces. Under unity of command, any mission falls within the authority and responsibility of a single, responsible commander. Commanders receive orders from only one superior, to whom they are accountable for accomplishing the mission.

2-29. In certain circumstances, such as some interagency and multinational operations, unity of command may not be possible. In addition, Army forces may include contractors, over whom commanders have authority different from command. However, commanders still organize their C2 (command and control) system to achieve unity of effort. (See FM 3-0.) When unity of command is not possible, commanders must achieve unity of effort through cooperation and coordination among all elements of the force—even if they are not part of the same command structure.

Employ Decentralized Execution

2-30. Decentralized execution is essential to gaining and maintaining the operational initiative in dynamic operations and environments of high uncertainty. (*Operational initiative* is setting and dictating the terms of action throughout the battle or operation. It applies at all levels of war [FM 3-0]). Decentralized execution requires subordinates to act with agility that unbalances the enemy. It leads to disrupting the enemy force's coherence and destroying its will to resist. It requires subordinates to use their initiative to make decisions that further their higher commander's intent. Delegating this authority is especially important if subordinates are to take advantage of unforeseen events or adjust to changes in the situation before the enemy can effectively react. Decentralized execution allows subordinates with current information to make decisions. It reduces the amount of information passed up and down the chain of command. Generally, the more dynamic the circumstances, the greater the need for decisions at lower levels. However, even in situations where a high level of knowledge exists at high levels,

commanders must exercise decentralized execution routinely or subordinates' initiative will disappear as subordinates become used to waiting for detailed instructions from higher headquarters.

2-31. Decentralized execution, central to mission command, requires delegating specific decisionmaking authority. Determining what authority to delegate is an essential part of the art of command. This delegating may be explicit, as in the specified tasks outlined in orders, or implicit, as in the implied tasks and commander's intent found in mission orders. Delegating authority also provides a means of handling the information produced by modern technology and operations. It reduces the number of decisions made at the higher levels and increases agility through reduced response time at lower levels. Delegation not only applies to subordinate commanders but also to staff members. Detailed command requires more decisions at higher levels, often overloading those commanders.

2-32. When delegating authority to subordinates, commanders do everything in their power to set the necessary conditions for success by the subordinate. They allocate enough resources for them to accomplish their missions. These resources include information as well as forces, materiel, and time. Forces include combat, combat support, and combat service support units and systems. Information resources include RI, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets, and priority of access to higher-level collection means. Because of the need for economy of force, allocating resources is not just a management or scientific matter, but one requiring the art of command. (See paragraphs 2-100–2-104.)

2-33. Commanders must still synchronize subordinates' activities. Synchronization of effects during execution results from integrating fragmentary information and complex combat functions during planning and preparation. A single, unifying concept of operations, together with a keen understanding of time-space dynamics, is needed to synchronize effects. Delegating authority to subordinates, who exercise initiative within the commander's intent, allows them to initiate activities that synchronize their units with those of the rest of the force without consulting the commander.

2-34. Successful integration means that activity is arranged in time and space to achieve desired effects at decisive points. Prudent selection of and attention to the commander's critical information requirements (CCIR) facilitate integrating information. (See paragraphs B-68–B-72.) Commanders consider integration as part of the branches and sequels to a plan. Effectively integrating activities requires understanding the capabilities and limitations of systems on the battlefield and ensuring coordination among the units and activities participating in an operation.

2-35. Under mission command, orders and plans are as brief and simple as possible. Decentralized execution relies on subordinates making necessary coordination and on implicit communication—the human capacity for mutual understanding with minimum verbal information exchange. Decentralizing seeks to increase tempo (the rate of military action) and improve the ability to deal with fluid and disorderly situations. Moreover, reliance on implicit communication makes C2 less vulnerable to disruption of the information flow than centralized execution.

Develop Trust

2-36. Trust is one of the cornerstones of leadership. It is essential to successful mission command. Like loyalty, it must go up and down the chain of command; like respect, it must be earned. To function effectively, commanders must trust their subordinates, and subordinates must trust their commander. Subordinates more willingly exercise the initiative required in mission command when their commander trusts them. They will also be more willing to encourage initiative by their own subordinates if they have learned to trust that their higher commander will accept and support the outcome. Likewise, commanders delegate greater authority to subordinates whose judgment they trust. Commanders must also trust their colleagues commanding adjacent and supporting forces, and must earn their trust as well. When a commander exercises subordinates' initiative, mutual trust gives other commanders at the same level the confidence to act to resynchronize their actions with those of that commander. Such actions bring the operation back into synchronization without requiring detailed instructions from higher echelons. Once established and sustained, trust brings its own rewards. It allows each level of command to focus on its overall operations rather than on those of subordinates.

2-37. There are few shortcuts to gaining the trust of others. Often slowly gained, trust can be lost quickly by mistakes made under pressure and the extreme conditions of war. It is based on personal qualities, including professional competence, personal example, and integrity. It starts with technical and tactical warfighting skills because those are the easiest to demonstrate. Soldiers must see values and attributes in action before they become a basis for trust. Trust also comes from successful shared experiences and training, usually gained incidental to operations but also deliberately developed by the commander. During these shared experiences, the interaction of the commander, subordinates, and soldiers through communicating up as well as down, reinforces trust. Soldiers see the chain of command accomplishing the mission, taking care of their welfare, and sharing hardships and danger.

Develop Mutual Understanding

2-38. Mutual understanding both supports and derives from trust. However, like trust, it requires time to establish. From their experiences, commanders understand the issues and concerns of subordinates. Professional knowledge and study give subordinates an insight into command at higher levels. Commanders can develop mutual understanding, both implicit and explicit, in their organizations through training. Good commanders ensure that they understand their subordinates and that subordinates understand them. Mutual understanding is essential for conducting successful operations under mission command.

2-39. Important sources of mutual understanding are nonverbal communication (a direct leadership skill; see FM 22-100), using key, well-understood phrases and doctrinal terms, and anticipating each other's thoughts. Nonverbal communications are faster and more effective than detailed, explicit communications. Commanders can aid mutual understanding by exhibiting a demeanor and personal mannerisms that reinforce, or at least do not contradict, the spoken message. Units develop the ability to communicate

nonverbally through familiarity and trust, as well as a shared philosophy and experiences. Sharing a common perception of military problems also leads to mutual understanding. "Common perception" does not imply any requirement to come to identical solutions; under mission command understanding what effect to achieve is more important than agreement on how to achieve it. Activities that can lead to mutual understanding include officer professional development meetings, terrain walks, and professional discussions.

Command Based on Trust and Mutual Understanding— Grant's Orders to Sherman, 1864

In a letter to MG William T. Sherman dated 4 April 1864, LTG Ulysses S. Grant outlined his 1864 campaign plan. Grant described Sherman's role as follows:

"It is my design, if the enemy keep quiet and allow me to take the initiative in the Spring Campaign to work all parts of the Army to-gether, and, somewhat, toward a common center.… You I propose to move against Johnston's Army, to break it up and to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their War resources. I do not propose to lay down for you a plan of Campaign, but simply to lay down the work it is desirable to have done and leave you free to execute in your own way. Submit to me however as early as you can your plan of operation."

Sherman responded to Grant immediately in a letter dated 10 April 1864. He sent Grant, as requested, his specific plan of operations, demonstrating that he understood Grant's intent:

"...That we are now all to act in a Common plan, Converging on a Common Center, looks like Enlightened War.... I will not let side issues draw me off from your main plan in which I am to Knock Joe [Confederate GEN Joseph E.] Johnston, and do as much damage to the resources of the Enemy as possible.... I would ever bear in mind that Johnston is at all times to be kept so busy that he cannot in any event send any part of his command against you or [Union MG Nathaniel P.] Banks."

Make Timely and Effective Decisions and Act

2-40. A tempo advantageous to friendly forces can place the enemy under the pressures of uncertainty and time. Throughout the operations process, making and communicating decisions faster than the enemy can react produces a tempo with which the enemy cannot compete. These decisions include determining the information the commander requires for decisions (CCIR—commander's critical information requirements); assigning missions; prioritizing, allocating, and organizing forces and resources; and selecting the critical times and places to act. Decisionmaking during operations includes knowing how and when to adjust previous decisions. The speed and accuracy of a commander's actions to address changing situations is a key contributor to agility. Finally, commanders must anticipate the activities and effects that occur because of their decisions, including unintended second-order effects, effects caused by the enemy's reaction to friendly actions, and effects on future operations. (FM 22-100 discusses second- and third-order effects.)

2-41. To make timely decisions, commanders must understand the effects of their decisions on a complex operational environment. To help them understand, staffs work together to develop the environment input to the common operational picture (COP). Understanding the environment includes civil considerations; such as, the population (with demographics and culture), the government, economics, nongovernmental organizations, and history—among other factors. Commanders make decisions that start and govern actions by subordinate forces throughout the operations process.

2-42. Timely decisions and actions are essential for effective C2. Commanders who consistently decide and act quicker than the enemy have a significant advantage. By the time the slower commander decides and acts, the faster one has already changed the situation, rendering the slower one's actions inappropriate. With such an advantage, the commander can maintain the initiative and dictate the tempo. (See paragraph A-5.)

2-43. Mission command makes it easier for commanders to make timely decisions and take actions that create and exploit this advantage. Effective commanders do the following:

- Take enemy plans, capabilities, and reaction times into account when making decisions.
- Make decisions quickly—even with incomplete information. Commanders who can make and implement decisions faster than the enemy, even to a small degree, gain an accruing advantage that becomes significant over time,
- Not delay a decision in hopes of finding a perfect solution to a battlefield problem. Adopt a satisfactory COA with acceptable risk as quickly as possible. (See chapter 4.)
- Delegate decisionmaking authority as low as possible to obtain faster decisions in battle. Decisionmaking at lower echelons is faster and more direct. Support decentralized execution by communicating ("describing") with subordinates and adjacent commanders frequently.

2-44. Commanders change and combine intuitive and analytical decisionmaking techniques as the situation requires. Because uncertainty and time drive most decisions, commanders emphasize intuitive decisionmaking as the norm, and develop their subordinates accordingly. Emphasizing experienced judgment and intuition over deliberate analysis, the intuitive approach helps commanders increase tempo and develops the flexibility to deal with the uncertainty that follows. The intuitive approach is consistent with the fact that there are no perfect solutions to battlefield problems. However, commanders consider the factors that favor analytical decisionmaking. When time is not critical, commanders use an analytical approach or incorporate analysis into their intuitive decisions. Time permitting, commanders can have their staffs validate intuitive decisions, even while refining them, ensuring they are at least suitable, feasible, and acceptable.

2-45. When time is available, commanders and staffs use the MDMP, a highly analytical technique. However, commanders can alter the MDMP to fit time-constrained circumstances and produce a satisfactory plan. In time-constrained conditions, commanders assess the situation, update their commander's visualization, and direct the staff to perform those MDMP activities

needed to support the required decisions. Streamlined processes permit commanders and staffs to shorten the time needed to issue orders when the situation changes. In a time-constrained environment, many steps of the MDMP are conducted concurrently. To an outsider, it may appear that experienced commanders and staffs omit key steps. In reality, they use existing products or perform steps in their heads instead of on paper. They also use many shorthand procedures and implicit communication. FRAGOs and WARNOs are essential in this environment.

2-46. Commanders and staffs constantly assess where the operation is in relation to the end state and estimate how best to adjust that operation to accomplish the mission and posture the force for future operations. The commander's visualization and the staff's running estimates, maintained continuously, are the primary assessment tools. Keeping running estimates current is key to keeping commanders aware of feasible options. Staffs use newly collected information to replace outdated facts and assumptions in their previous estimate. They perform analysis and evaluation based on the information, and form new or revised conclusions and recommendations. The commander's visualization focuses the staff's running estimates. The commander's visualization identifies decisions the commander expects to make. Running estimates focus on determining recommendations concerning those decisions. To dominate the enemy during operations, commanders can never be without options. Current running estimates based on the commander's visualization provide the recommendations commanders need to make timely decisions during execution.

2-47. Effective tactical decisionmaking by calm, competent, confident commanders synchronize operations. It is refined through the war-gaming process. Synchronization is continuous, as execution requires constant adjustment to unfolding battlefield events, including branches and sequels.

ART OF COMMAND

2-48. The art of command lies in the conscious and skillful exercise of its authority to fulfill command responsibilities through decisionmaking and leadership. The true measure of the art of command is not whether a commander uses certain techniques or procedures, but if the techniques and procedures used were appropriate to the situation. Expert performance in the art of command leads to mission accomplishment with fewest friendly casualties. Proficiency in the art of command stems from years of schooling and training, self-development, and operational and training experiences.

AUTHORITY

2-49. While all elements of command contain some aspects of the art of command, some depend more on the art and others more on the science. Authority is primarily a matter of statutes and regulations (science). The art in authority lies in establishing personal authority. (See paragraph 2-7 and FM 22-100.)

DECISIONMAKING

2-50. A large portion of the art of command involves decisionmaking. Commanders use the *visualize-describe-direct* methodology as their personal contribution to decisionmaking, whether they have a staff or not. (See FM 3-0.) Staffs support commanders with running estimates.

2-51. Visualizing is primarily an aspect of the art of war. Describing balances the art and science of war, with the art expressed primarily in the commander's intent and planning guidance. Directing is primarily science. Visualizing and describing are addressed below. Directing is addressed briefly below and covered in detail in FM 5-0.

Visualize

2-52. ***Visualize* means to create and think in mental images**. Human beings do not normally think in terms of data, or even knowledge; they generally think in terms of ideas or images—mental pictures of a given situation. There are three sources for these images:

- Principles that guide commanders' behavior: their military experience, training, and education, including their knowledge of doctrine.
- Force goals, the timetable for achieving them, and the end state: militarily, they include the higher commander's intent, the force mission, and the commander's own intent.
- Decisions for allocating resources and sequencing activities to achieve the force goals, including specific actions and expected events.

2-53. Visualizing military operations effectively depends on understanding the human factors involved in operations and the dynamics of operations themselves. Commanders consider both of these when performing their commander's visualization.

2-54. **Human Factors.** In operations, the quality of soldiers and cohesion of units are critical to mission accomplishment. Commanders know the status of their forces. They are aware that circumstances may prevent friendly forces from performing to their doctrinal capabilities. Some units may have just received new replacements or had an extended period of operations under heavy stress. Others may be experiencing a lack of repair parts that renders major equipment unavailable in expected quantities or limits their capabilities. Still others may have sustained casualties that make them less capable, experienced an enemy NBC attack, or just arrived in theater and are not yet acclimated. Commanders consider such factors as these when establishing their FFIR.

2-55. Military operations are dynamic: they affect and are affected by human interactions. These interactions occur within friendly forces, within enemy forces, and between friendly and enemy forces. Commanders understand and use these relationships to overcome uncertainty and chaos, and maintain the balance and focus of their forces. Then they can seize and exploit opportunities by unleashing their soldiers' initiative, audacity, creativity, judgment, and strength of character. The art of command involves exploiting these dynamics to the advantage of friendly forces and the disadvantage of the enemy. Commanders consider the condition of enemy forces as well as

their own and acts to ensure enemy commanders suffer from the pressures and consequences of operations more than they do.

2-56. Commanders do not take the readiness of friendly forces relative to the enemy for granted. Military operations take a toll on the moral, physical, and mental stamina of soldiers that, if left unchecked, can ultimately lead to their inability to accomplish the mission, regardless of the condition of the enemy. Commanders consider these dynamics throughout the operations process and recognize the limits of human endurance. They press the fight tenaciously and aggressively. They accept risks and push soldiers and systems to the limits of their endurance—and sometimes seemingly beyond—for as long as possible. The art of command includes recognizing when to push soldiers to their limits and when to rest soldiers to prevent individual and collective collapse. Even the most successful combat actions can render soldiers incapable of further operations. Commanders recognize this and act aggressively to prevent this situation. A loss of stamina is even more telling if the encounter with the enemy is unsuccessful. Commanders know this as well, and prepare themselves for it.

> *[N]ext to a battle lost, the greatest misery is a battle gained.*
>
> Wellington, July 1815

2-57. **Dynamics of Operations.** The dynamic relationships among friendly forces, enemy forces, and the environment make land operations exceedingly complex. Understanding each of these elements separately is necessary but not sufficient to understand the relationships among them. The complexity of land combat operations requires control to inform command. Friendly forces compete with the enemy to attain operational advantages in both the physical and information environments. Advantages in the physical environment allow Army forces to close with and destroy the enemy with minimal losses. Advantages in the information environment result in information superiority, which complements and reinforces advantages gained in the physical environment. Together, these advantages allow Army forces to defeat enemy forces—decisively.

2-58. Operations in the information environment involve collecting and processing information at the level of fidelity necessary to support commanders' situational understanding. Situational understanding allows commanders to exploit operational advantages and seize opportunities. Success can be gauged by whether commanders have the information they need at the time they must make a decision. It comes from careful analysis, an understanding of the technical aspects of information collection and intelligence, a high level of training, and experience. Understanding these dynamics—both in the physical and information environments—is the first step in visualizing them. Assigning a mission to a force gives its commander a focus for visualizing these dynamics.

2-59. The environment is neutral in terms of favoring one side over the other. It can keep both sides from performing up to their capabilities or can be used to advantage by the force best equipped and trained to cope with its effects. Commanders understand these effects and account for them. (See appendix B).

2-60. During operations, the complexity and unpredictability of interactions among friendly forces, enemy forces, and the environment add to the fog and friction of war. Applying the art of command requires commanders to account for these interrelated effects. They visualize the second- and third-order effects of their actions and develop COAs that reduce their negative effects and exploit their positive effects.

2-61. **Commander's Visualization.** ***Commander's visualization*** **is the mental process of achieving a clear understanding of the force's current state with relation to the enemy and environment (situational understanding), and developing a desired end state that represents mission accomplishment and the key tasks that move the force from its current state to the end state (commander's intent).** Commander's visualization (see figure 2-2) is a way of mentally viewing the dynamic relationship among Army forces, enemy forces, and the environment at the present while conducting operations against an opposing force over time. It occurs until the end state of an operation is achieved. Commander's visualization is the key to combining the art of command with the science of control. (See chapter 4.) It focuses on three main factors:

- Foreseeing an end state.
- Understanding the current state of friendly and enemy forces.
- Visualizing the dynamics of operations leading to the end state.

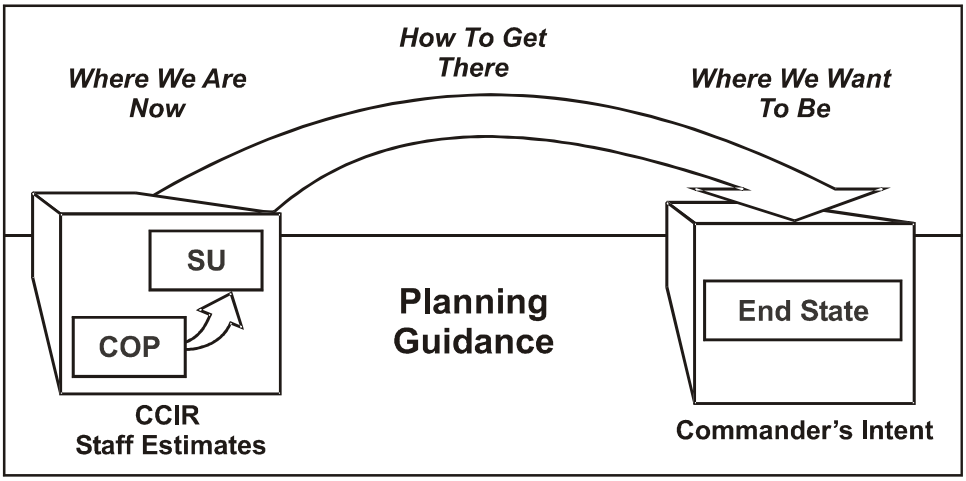


Figure 2-2. Commander's Visualization

2-62. ***End State.*** Whether during training or operations, the most important aspect of the commander's visualization is foreseeing a feasible outcome that results in mission success and leaves the force postured for the next operation. Its product is the commander's mental image of the end state. Commander's visualization includes anticipating outcomes, understanding the relationships between means and ends, and understanding inherent risks. Commanders assess the current situation and visualize future operations. They always use the most current intelligence about the enemy and environment when visualizing.

2-63. ***Situational Understanding.*** Situational understanding involves understanding the current state of friendly and enemy forces. It is derived from applying judgment and experience to the COP through the filter of the commander's knowledge of the friendly forces, threat, and environment. Situational understanding includes physical factors (such as location of forces), human factors (such as fatigue and morale), and the relationships among friendly and enemy forces and the environment that potentially represent opportunities and threats for friendly forces. Commanders need to develop three views of each situation:

- A close-up of the situation, a "feel" for the action gained through personal observation and experience.
- An overview of the situation and the overall development of the operation.
- The situation from the enemy's perspective.

2-64. To visualize the battlespace, commanders consider the human dimension; the physical dimensions of width, depth, height, and time; and the information environment. (See FM 3-0.) Failure to consider all battlespace dimensions results in an incomplete situational understanding and renders commanders vulnerable to military deception and other threat information operations. Accurate situational understanding is especially important when engaging an adaptive threat using asymmetric means.

2-65. Commanders base their commander's visualization of a situation not only on facts but also on their interpretation of them. They incorporate images from others' observations as well as their own. In general, the higher the level of command the more commanders depend on information from others and less on their own observations. This situation can cause several problems:

- First, when commanders observe a situation firsthand they intuitively appreciate the level of uncertainty. However, they may lose this when they receive information secondhand. This is especially dangerous when a commander does not realize it is happening. For example, a high-technology information display that appears especially reliable may, in fact, be based on hours-old information. Effective commanders guard against a false sense of security based on modern INFOSYS. They are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of information sources and consider them when visualizing.
- Second, most situations include more details than an observer can communicate. The lack of time to communicate during operations means that reports may lack significant details. In addition, reports sent hastily may be wrong. Commanders counter this problem by basing decisions on information from as many sources as possible. The art of command includes deciding when to make decisions versus waiting for more information.
- Third, each node or person can distort and delay information as it passes to its final destination. This means that the higher the echelon, the greater the chance that any individual report will contain errors. Again, commanders counter this problem by basing decisions on information from as many sources as possible. The higher the echelon, the more sources of information commanders have and, in most cases, the

more time commanders have to make decisions. However, higher echelon commanders still must decide when to make a decision. Deciding when to decide requires a "feel" for the battle. Higher echelon commanders use all available assets to obtain and keep that feel.

- Finally, some systems may be vulnerable to the enemy's innovative use of military deception. (See appendix B.) Commanders counter this by knowing themselves, their subordinates, and the enemy. They draw on intelligence to determine what the enemy is most likely to do. They conduct counterdeception operations as necessary. (See FM 3-13.)

2-66. ***Key Tasks.*** Finally, commanders visualize the dynamics between the opposing forces during the sequence of actions leading from the current situation to the end state. This includes evaluating possible enemy reactions and friendly counters to those moves. This part of the commander's visualization produces the key tasks: those tasks that the force as a whole must perform or conditions the force must meet to achieve the end state and stated purpose of the operation.

2-67. Commanders begin their commander's visualization when they receive or perceive a mission. They start by applying their current situational understanding of where they are to this mission. They develop their desired end state by determining how their mission contributes to achieving their higher commander's intent and what is possible, given their understanding of their own force, the enemy, and the environment. As commanders analyze or receive the staff's mission analysis, they develop a mental image of the dynamics involved in moving their forces from their current positions to the desired end state, and of possible future operations. They know that during operations, enemies try to execute their own plans. They will endeavor to upset the commander's plan, desynchronize friendly force operations, and destroy friendly units. Enemies exploit any advantages to further their own operations and defeat friendly forces. Commanders incorporate their knowledge of enemy capabilities into their commander's visualization. They guide the staff as it plans the operation to ensure the force is ready for the opposition it will face.

Describe

2-68. ***Describe*** **means to relate operations to time and space in terms of accomplishing the purpose of the overall operation.** Unless subordinate commanders and staffs understand the commander's visualization, there is no unifying design. In all operations, purpose and time determine the allocation of space. To describe their commander's visualization, commanders communicate their visualization by describing it in doctrinal terms. They clarify their description, as circumstances require. Using terms suited to the nature of the mission and their experience, commanders describe their visualization through—

- Commander's intent.
- Planning guidance.
- CCIR.

2-69. Commanders may also describe their visualizations graphically using doctrinal graphics for easier communication as well as verbally. Describing is

not a one-time event. As the commander confirms or modifies his visualization, he continues to describe his visualization to his staff and subordinates so they may better support his decisionmaking. Better effort in describing leads to better comprehension by subordinates of the context of his decision and better decisions on their part when exercising subordinates' initiative.

Direct

2-70. ***Direct* means to communicate execution information**. To command is to direct. Directing converts commanders' decisions into effective action by their forces. Commanders generate effective action through directing forces and synchronizing the battlefield operating systems. Commanders direct the outcome of major operations, battles, and engagements by—

- Guiding and motivating the command toward mission accomplishment.
- Assigning missions.
- Prioritizing and allocating resources.
- Assessing and taking risks.
- Deciding when and how to make adjustments.
- Committing reserves.
- Seeing, hearing, and understanding the needs of subordinates and superiors.

2-71. Militarily the means of directing include plans and orders, especially the commander's intent, concept of operations, the synchronization matrix, the decision support template, and other supporting plans, such as branches and sequels.

LEADERSHIP

2-72. After commanders make decisions, they guide their forces throughout execution. After forces have been put in motion, commanders must provide the strength and will to follow through with the COA they chose. They must also possess the wisdom to know when to change that COA and make further decisions that address changes in the situation. FM 22-100 discusses leadership actions when executing. Two elements of leadership peculiar to command are command presence and skilled judgment.

Command Presence

> *A commander in battle has three means of influencing the action: Fire support…; his personal presence on the battlefield [emphasis added]; and the use of his reserve.*
>
> LTG Harold G. Moore (USA, Ret.)
> *We Were Soldiers Once…and Young*

2-73. Establishing command presence makes the commander's knowledge and experience available to subordinates. The commander's presence also communicates the commander's intent. Skilled commanders communicate tactical and technical knowledge that goes beyond plans and procedures. Subordinates can use knowledge of their commander's leadership style to guide their tactical decisions in unanticipated situations. Establishing

command presence does not require giving subordinates detailed instructions, nor does it include second-guessing subordinates' performance. Command presence establishes a background for all plans and procedures so that subordinates can understand how and when to adapt them to achieve the commander's intent. Commanders can establish command presence in a variety of ways, including the following:

- Briefings.
- Back-briefings.
- Rehearsals.
- Leader's reconnaissance.
- On-site visits.
- Commander's intent.
- After-action reviews.
- Commander's guidance.
- Personal example. (See FM 22-100.)

2-74. How well these techniques establish command presence depends on the actions of commanders or those acting for them. Commanders or their representatives use their presence to gather and communicate information; such as, knowledge about their views of the command's purpose, goals, constraints, and tradeoffs. This exchange can take the form of direct communication, questioning, discussing, or conversing in informal settings.

2-75. Command takes place from the commander's location. To lead, commanders cannot be prisoners of a command post. Commanders lead by example and by direction; they position themselves where they can best command without losing the ability to respond to changing situations. Modern technology allows commanders to obtain the information they need to assess operations and risks, and make necessary adjustments, from anywhere in the area of operations (AO).

Skilled Judgment

2-76. Commanders make decisions using judgment acquired from experience, training, study, imagination, and creative and critical thinking. Judgment forms an estimate based on available information, filling information gaps with an informed intuition. Experience contributes to judgment by providing a basis for rapidly identifying practical COAs and dismissing impractical ones. Study adds the experiences of others to those of the commander. It may provide knowledge essential to commanders' understanding and decisions, and the relationship of the situation that they and their forces face.

2-77. Commanders use judgment in applying doctrine, whether visualizing, describing, directing, or leading. Intellect, doctrine, and experience combine to shape judgment, expanding it to more than an educated guess. Moreover, commanders use informed judgment to apply doctrine to specific situations. In these cases, the art of command lies in interpreting how doctrine applies to the specific situation.

2-78. Through informed judgment, commanders also recognize when doctrine (or parts of it) does not adequately serve the needs of a specific situation. In that case, they base decisions and actions on the circumstances, as described

by the factors of METT-TC (mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, time available, and civil considerations). Commanders who deviate from doctrine based on circumstances make sure to communicate their rationale to subordinates. They use doctrinal terms to limit confusion, while cautioning that they have deviated from doctrine and explaining the implications. Doing this helps guard against the perception of either disdain for authority or ignorance of doctrine.

2-79. Judgment is required for selecting the critical time and place to act, assigning missions, prioritizing, managing risk, allocating resources, and leading soldiers. Thorough knowledge of the science of war, a strong ethical sense, and an understanding of enemy and friendly capabilities form the basis of the judgment commanders require. Judgment becomes more refined as commanders become more experienced. With experience, commanders become confident in their ability to assess a situation after processing available information (although common sense still guides even experienced commanders). Increasing their knowledge, developing their intellect, and gaining experience allow commanders to develop the greater judgment required by increased responsibilities. Judgment allows commanders to distinguish calculated risks essential to successfully conducting operations from military gambles based on potentially disastrous rashness. (See paragraph 2-94.)

2-80. Commanders apply judgment in several dimensions. How they apply judgment in each proceeds from how they intend to accomplish the mission. These dimensions are—

- Decentralization.
- Subordinates' initiative.
- Risk.
- Resolve.
- Resource allocation.
- Use of staff.

2-81. **Decentralization.** Commanders favor decentralized execution wherever possible. It is the doctrinal solution to uncertainty and increased tempo. However, decentralized execution is not appropriate in all cases. Centralized execution is better for managing scarce resources, especially those that can produce effects throughout the AO. It may also be necessary to mass effects decisively in some cases. Centralized execution is also suitable for operations in which greater than normal coordination—either within the force or with other Services' or nations' forces—is involved. A command's state of training or composition may require centralized execution: if the command has not trained together enough or has too many newly assigned organizations, the commander may centralize execution until it becomes a cohesive team. These circumstances and the conditions governing their application are examples of when commanders may determine centralized execution is necessary. However, they remain the exception in an operational environment that requires disciplined initiative at all levels.

2-82. Commanders balance the proportions of decentralized and centralized execution for each operation. Centralization may contribute to subordinates losing situational understanding regarding the overall operation, resulting in

a loss of the context within which subordinates exercise subordinates' initiative. This situation risks making the force less agile. Commanders apply judgment when deciding between the increased control that comes with centralized execution and the increased flexibility of decentralized execution.

2-83. **Subordinates' initiative. *Subordinates' initiative* is the assumption of responsibility for deciding and initiating independent actions when the concept of operations no longer applies or when an unanticipated opportunity leading to achieving the commander's intent presents itself**. It complements *operational initiative*, which involves seizing and dictating the terms of action throughout the battle or operation (FM 3-0).

2-84. Mission command requires subordinates to exercise disciplined initiative guided by their commander's intent. It charges subordinates to act when presented with an unforeseen opportunity for success or to counter an unanticipated threat to the mission or force. Mission command relies on subordinates effecting necessary coordination without orders. While mission command stresses exercising subordinates' initiative at the lowest possible level, all soldiers recognize that doing so may reduce synchronization of the operation. Thus, commanders accept the uncertainty that accompanies subordinates exercising initiative. Their trust in subordinates they have trained gives them the assurance that those subordinates will direct actions that will accomplish the mission within the commander's intent.

2-85. For most operations, the benefits of subordinates' initiative outweigh the cost in synchronization. However, for some operations such cost may be unacceptable. The battle for France in 1944 offers examples of both situations: In the exploitation by American forces after the breakout from the Normandy beachhead, subordinates' initiative unquestionably contributed to Third Army's success. However, in Operation COBRA—the operation that produced the breakout—synchronization of the multinational, joint force, was the governing factor. This synchronization required extensive coordination, which required more centralized control.

2-86. A clear commander's intent leaves no doubt regarding the limits within which subordinates may exercise subordinates' initiative. It gives subordinates the confidence to apply their judgment in ambiguous situations and take actions they think will best accomplish the mission.

2-87. Even when exercising initiative, neither commanders nor subordinates are independent actors. Subordinates consider at least three factors when deciding how to exercise subordinates' initiative:

- Whether the benefits of the action outweigh the costs of desynchronizing the overall operation.
- Whether the action will further the higher commander's intent.
- Whether the action's purpose is to take advantage of an opportunity for victory or prevent defeat.

Making the best decision for the situation requires commanders to exercise judgment in assessing each factor in terms of the circumstances affecting it.

2-88. The exercise of subordinates' initiative must lead to benefits that outweigh the costs of desynchronizing operations. If time permits, subordinates attempt to communicate their new situational understanding and

recommended COA to their commander. However, subordinates may depart from their orders if they are unable to contact their commander, or if there is not time to obtain permission to seize a fleeting opportunity. The main criterion in this case is the urgency of the situation. When subordinates communicate their intentions to the commander, the commander can assess the implications for the overall force, as well as for other operations, and set in motion supporting actions. However, if any doubt exists about whether to contact the commander or act to seize a fleeting opportunity, subordinates should act if they can do so within the commander's intent.

2-89. Commanders exercise subordinates' initiative within their higher commander's intent. Commanders establish their own commander's intent within the intent of their higher commander. The higher commander's intent provides the basis for unity of effort throughout the larger force.

2-90. Commanders exercise initiative to take advantage of an opportunity for victory, not to prevent defeat. Advantages can take the form of inflicting greater damage on the enemy, completing the mission more rapidly, or entailing less cost to the friendly force.

2-91. Subordinates should not have to wait for a breakdown in communications—or a crisis situation—to learn how to act without the commander's direct participation. *Command by negation* is a training technique that develops initiative in subordinates. It works like this: After giving subordinates a mission order that includes a clear commander's intent, the commander places them in ambiguous situations requiring exercise of subordinates' initiative. In those situations, subordinates report what they intend to do and execute unless the commander specifically denies permission. This training technique encourages subordinates to exercise initiative by placing them in situations that require it.

2-92. Command by negation fosters trust and mutual understanding. It rests on the assumption that permitting honest mistakes develops in subordinates the ability to execute mission orders fully when they cannot communicate with their commander. As subordinates realize their commander will support their decisions, trust is built and subordinates become willing to exercise subordinates' initiative. As commanders see subordinates perform in uncertain situations, they gain trust in their subordinates' judgment and ability to exercise subordinates' initiative. Finally, through practicing this technique, commanders and subordinates develop mutual understanding, the ability of each to know what the other will do based on based on knowledge of each other's character and mutual confidence in judgment and abilities.

2-93. **Risk.** Using initiative requires a training and organizational climate that promotes calculated, disciplined risk-taking focused on winning rather than preventing defeat—even when preventing defeat appears safer. Mission command requires commanders who take calculated risks, exercise initiative, and act decisively—even when the outcome is uncertain. Because uncertainty exists in all operations, every decision involves risk. Among key elements of the art of command are deciding how much risk to accept and minimizing the effects of accepted risk. All techniques for reducing uncertainty take time (see paragraphs 1-47—1-50); commanders must accept risk and act. Commanders can reduce risk by foresight and careful planning. However, military judgment

is required to determine whether the risk is worth taking. Ultimately, the willingness to take calculated risks stems from the commander's character.

2-94. A calculated risk is not the same as a military gamble. **A *calculated risk* is an exposure to chance of injury or loss when the commander can visualize the outcome in terms of mission accomplishment or damage to the force, and judges the outcome as worth the cost.** Taking a calculated risk is acceptable. **A *military gamble* is a decision in which a commander risks the force without a reasonable level of information about the outcome.** In the case of a military gamble, the commander decides based on hope rather than reason. The situations that justify a military gamble occur when defeat or destruction of the friendly force is only a matter of time and the only chance for mission accomplishment or preservation of the force lies in the gamble.

Calculated Risk or Military Gamble? Operation HAWTHORNE, Dak To, Vietnam

At 0230, 7 June 1966, a battalion of the 24th NVA (North Vietnamese Army) Regiment attacked an artillery firebase manned by elements of 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, beginning the battle of Dak To. While the forces at the firebase defeated this attack, two battalions of the 101st Airborne were lifted in by helicopters to envelop the 24th NVA Regiment in the Dak To area. One battalion, 1/327th, attacked north up Dak Tan Kan valley, while the other, 2/502d, attacked toward the south. The 1/327th encountered the NVA first and fixed them. The 2/502d established a blocking position initially but then began a sweep south to link up with 1/327th.

The 2/502d used its famous "checkerboard" technique in its advance, breaking down into small units, with squad-size patrols searching designated areas into which the battalion had divided its AO. This technique covered ground, but the squads were too weak to face stiff opposition. Company commanders had to assess indicators, decide when they indicated the presence of heavy enemy forces, and assemble their companies for action. As C Company advanced on 12 June, its commander, CPT William S. Carpenter Jr., sensed those indicators and concentrated his company, but it was surrounded and in danger of being overrun by an estimated NVA battalion. As he spoke to his battalion commander, LTC Hank Emerson ("the Gunfighter"), the sounds of the screaming, charging enemy could be heard over the radio. CPT Carpenter reportedly called for an air strike "right on top of us." The only air support available was armed with napalm; when it hit, it broke the enemy attack and saved the company. A day later, another company linked up with C Company, and they continued the mission. The battle of Dak To was a staggering defeat for the NVA.

CPT Carpenter's action can be considered a justified military gamble. The survival of his force was at stake. The NVA would have destroyed C Company before another company could relieve it. CPT Carpenter later stated privately that he realized the survival of his company was at stake, but that he did not actually call the air strike directly in on his position. Instead, he told the forward air controller to use the smoke marking his company's position as the aiming point for the air strike. He knew that using conventional air strike techniques and safe distances would not defeat the enemy. He also reasoned that the napalm

would “splash” forward of his position, causing more enemy than friendly casualties. The air strike did just that. Thus, CPT Carpenter exercised judgment based on experience. CPT Carpenter believed he was taking a calculated risk, although a high risk from the standpoint of troop safety. But he accepted that risk, made a decision, and acted. His actions saved his company and contributed to a major NVA defeat. CPT Carpenter and his first sergeant, 1SG Walter Sabaulaski, received the Distinguished Service Cross for their heroism.

2-95. Commanders alone decide what risk to accept during execution. They exercise the art of command when weighing their obligation to accomplish the mission at least cost to the force. They decide, using subjective factors and seasoned judgment, whether to accept risk. Risk assessment and risk management helps them determine what level of risk exists and how to mitigate it. (See FM 100-14.) Their decisions lie in whether or not to accept that risk for perceived gains or advantages.

2-96. Consideration of risk (both tactical and accident) begins during planning, as commanders designate and weight the decisive operation. To do this, they accept risk elsewhere to mass the combat power needed to accomplish the mission. In addition to mission accomplishment, commanders consider how the force needs to be postured for subsequent operations. Commanders evaluate whether the command can recover if they decide wrongly or if it will be in a position to seize an unexpected advantage over the enemy.

2-97. **Resolve.** Commanders apply judgment to distinguish resolve in pursuing the mission from obstinacy in pursuing a fruitless COA. While resolve is a command quality, obstinacy leads to excessive casualties, and possibly mission failure.

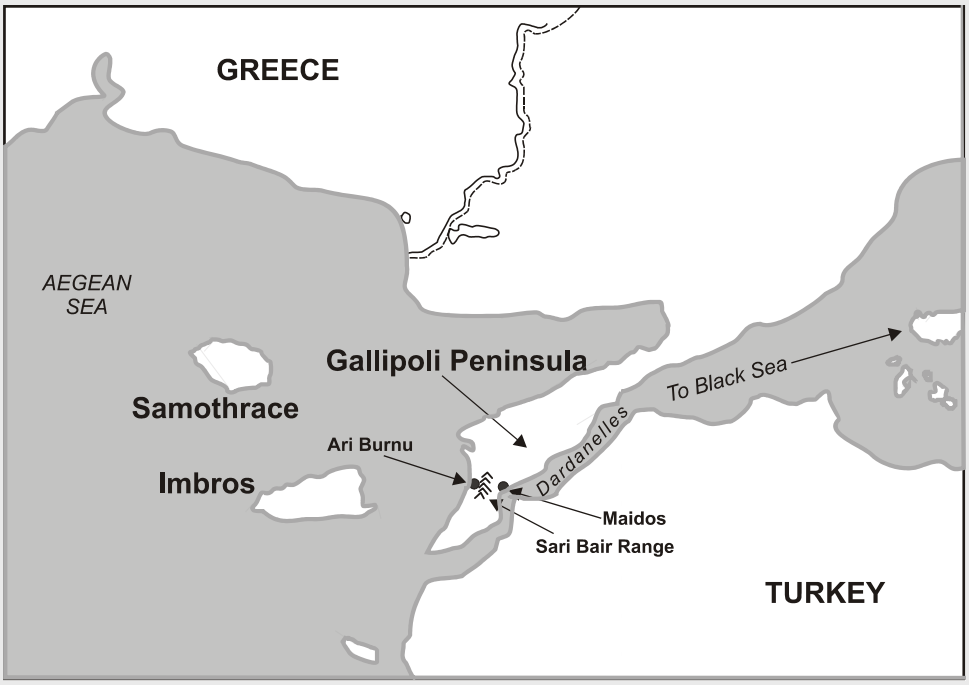
2-98. Commanders apply resolve to keep focus on the mission and retain flexibility in the methods or resources dedicated to accomplishing it. Applying resolve allows commanders to pursue mission accomplishment steadfastly at acceptable cost, even at physical risk. Resolve allows them to see the possibilities for success, despite minor—or even major—setbacks, casualties, and hardship.

Resolve—Mustafa Kemal at Gallipoli

On 25 April 1915, the Allies launched the Gallipoli campaign. (See map 2-1 on page 2-26.) The strategic objective was to open a line of communication to Russia and influence neutral Balkan states to favor the Allies’ cause. Unfortunately for them, Mustafa Kemal’s decisive and tenacious leadership at a crucial point in the battle preserved the Ottoman defenses. His troops seized the initiative and pushed the superior Allied invasion force back to its bridgehead. The result was nine months of trench warfare, followed by the Allies’ withdrawal from Gallipoli. First, Kemal exercised individual initiative to prevent Allied success, focusing his initial efforts on decisive points. Then, he exhibited resolve in holding until reinforcements arrived.

The Fifth (Turkish) Army commander, German General Liman von Sanders, expected a major Allied landing northeast of where the actual landing occurred. The British conducted a feint there and landed two ANZAC divisions as the main

effort at Ari Burnu, 30 miles to the south. Sanders had left only one Ottoman infantry company to guard the cove there. LTC Mustafa Kemal, commander of the 19th (Turkish) Infantry Division, which was in reserve at Maidos, was informed of the fighting at Ari Burnu. Although prewar plans contained contingencies for the division's use, he received no orders regarding the developing situation. Realizing a major Allied landing could split the peninsula and understanding the critical time factor, he decided to act without waiting for approval from his commander. He set off with a small force to assess the situation personally. Recognizing the importance of the hilly terrain, Kemal focused his attention on decisive points. When he encountered fleeing Turkish soldiers. Kemal emphatically dismissed their fears and ordered them to lie down in hopes of making the pursuing Allies believe they faced an ambush. The ruse bought Kemal valuable time, as it delayed the Allied force until arrival of advance elements from the 57th (Turkish) Infantry Regiment.



Map 2-1. Gallipoli

Kemal then engaged the enemy. He impressed upon his men the importance of controlling the hilltops at all costs, issuing his famous order: "I am not ordering you to attack. I am ordering you to die. In the time it takes us to die, other forces and commanders can come and take our place." Despite being outnumbered three to one, the Turks accomplished their mission, and the Allies were pushed back toward their bridgehead. Around noon, Kemal learned that there would be no additional support from the division. He then met personally with the corps commander to impress upon him the gravity of the situation. Kemal convinced him that if the Allies captured the high ground around Ari Burnu, they would be in an excellent position to cut the peninsula in half. The corps commander approved Kemal's request for additional forces. Both sides suffered heavy casualties, and only nightfall brought a lull in the fighting.

Kemal's resolute leadership had shaken his opponent's morale. Allied commanders had serious reservations as to whether their men could withstand another day of artillery barrages. The men were ordered to establish impregnable defensive positions in anticipation of a fresh Turkish assault, which gave Kemal time to revive his troops. There was some sniping and a few local encounters on 26 April, and on 27 April Kemal finally received major reinforcements. The front stabilized, and the opposing armies settled into trench warfare for the rest of 1915. On 16 January 1916, the Allies admitted defeat and withdrew.

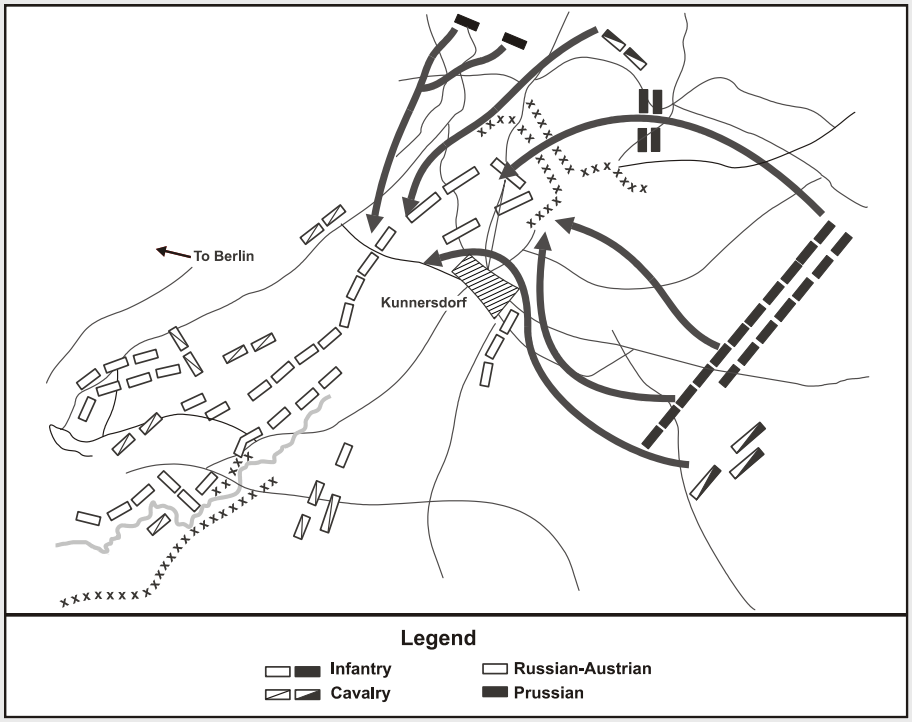
Kemal's decisive actions prevented the ANZAC forces from splitting the peninsula. The Allied mission failed, and a possible opportunity to shorten the war was lost. Kemal instinctively understood the enemy's intent and, recognizing the critical time factor, took the initiative without waiting for his commander's approval. He moved with confidence and courage, resolutely committed to concentrating his combat power to seize and hold key terrain. Confronted with superior forces, he refused to second-guess his initial decision, but rather demanded and, through force of leadership, obtained supreme sacrifices from his men.

2-99. In contrast to resolve, obstinacy consists of pursuing an ineffective method or dedicating resources to an unproductive COA while not making any progress toward accomplishing the mission. The art of command lies in distinguishing between the setbacks and hardships normally expected during combat and those that indicate failure. Indeed, as the following examples demonstrate, resolve consists of focus on the mission and flexibility in the method used to accomplish it.

Obstinacy—Frederick the Great at Kunersdorf

Although considered the foremost commander of his day, Frederick the Great (King of Prussia, 1740–1786) had his share of setbacks. One of the worst of these came at Kunersdorf (east of the Oder River between Frankfurt/Oder and present-day Kostrzyn, Poland) during the Seven Years' War. On 12 August 1759, his army was defeated there by a combined Russian and Austrian force. Much of the blame for the defeat lies with Frederick himself: his ill-considered battle plan, failure to measure the combat power of his own forces against that of his enemy, and stubborn insistence on pressing a hopeless attack were all critical elements in the Prussian defeat.

In late July 1759, a Russian army combined with an Austrian corps on the Oder River (the present boundary between Germany and Poland). (See map 2-2, page 2-28.) The forces totaled more than 64,000 men. Frederick's force numbered 50,000, but it had been hastily assembled from various units. In addition, losses in earlier campaigns had both decimated the officer corps and seriously reduced the quality of the soldiers. Nevertheless, Frederick decided to attack the Russians. By 10 August, he had concentrated his army and crossed the Oder in a forced march. His troops were short of food and water, and worn out from the heat. A hasty reconnaissance failed to disclose that the allied forces had fortified themselves on high ground north of Kunersdorf and that their positions were reinforced by obstacles and surrounded by marshy ground and forest. Frederick decided to flank the enemy with his main body, and the Prussians began an exhausting eight-hour march around the Austro-Russian entrenchments.



Map 2-2. Kunersdorf

Frederick's grasp of the enemy dispositions was incorrect. Instead of the expected exposed flank, he faced the allied position's strongest sector. Despite this and the loss of surprise, Frederick decided to attack. He was initially successful, but because of the terrain he was unable to exploit this success. Prussian attacks were repeatedly repulsed, resulting in heavy casualties. Frederick's subordinates advised him to call off the attack and accept the limited success. However, he stubbornly insisted on continuing and committed the last of his reserves. His detachment on the right was cut to pieces, and cavalry charges on the left were canalized by ponds and broken up by entrenched Russian artillery. The Austrians then launched a cavalry attack against the Prussian left and swept the Prussian cavalry from the field. The Prussian infantry's morale was completely shattered, and Frederick's army was reduced to a fleeing, panic-stricken mob.

Frederick lost because he failed to see the terrain, correctly assess the enemy and his own force, and mass decisive combat power at the right time and place while protecting his force. In his haste, he had proceeded without a proper reconnaissance, vastly underestimated his opponents' capabilities, and was blind to the exhaustion of his own troops. Moreover, by obstinately pressing a futile attack, contrary to the advice of his subordinates, he fatally compromised his army.

2-100. **Resource Allocation.** Applying judgment when allocating resources is one of the key aspects of the art of command. It has three dimensions:

- Balancing effectiveness and efficiency.
- Applying the principle of economy of force.
- Visualizing short- versus long-term benefits.

2-101. There is a distinct hierarchy of considerations in the tension between effectiveness and efficiency. The foremost consideration is mission accomplishment, or effectiveness. In planning, preparation, and execution, it is the most important consideration. A plan that does not accomplish the mission, regardless of how efficient it is, is worthless. Only if there are different ways to accomplish the mission does the second consideration, efficiency, comes into play.

2-102. Within considerations of efficiency, there is also a hierarchy: soldiers lives and other resources. The primary consideration is to conserve the lives of soldiers, even if other resources are wasted. Commanders use material resources lavishly, if doing so saves lives. Only when mission accomplishment and soldiers lives are accounted for will the saving of other scarce resources become important. Commanders have an obligation to conserve all resources, but accomplishing the mission and preserving soldiers' lives take precedence.

2-103. The second aspect of applying judgment to resource allocation is economy of force. Commanders weight their decisive operation to ensure mission accomplishment. This requires allocating minimum essential combat power to other operations. The art of command includes determining the minimum combat power essential to accomplishing a task. Commanders must allocate enough resources to subordinates to accomplish their missions, whether decisive or shaping. However, shaping operations should always have the minimum resources necessary; commanders weight the decisive operation with all possible combat power. If subordinates believe they have not received enough resources, or believe accomplishing their mission would produce an unacceptable cost to the force, they inform the commander. The commander then decides whether to accept the risk, allocate more combat power to the shaping operation, or change the plan.

2-104. The third aspect of applying judgment to resource allocation concerns visualizing short-term versus long-term benefits and determining their relative importance. Commanders must accomplish their mission at least cost to the force and remain able to conduct succeeding operations. At lower echelons, the focus is on the immediate operation—the short term. At progressively higher echelons, long-term considerations become more important. Among these are the cost to the force and the effects of the current operation on the ability to execute follow-on operations. Commanders balance the need for immediate mission accomplishment with requirements for subsequent operations.

2-105. **Use of Staff.** The final dimension of applying judgment lies in the commander's use of the staff. Commanders rely on and expect initiative from staff officers as much as from subordinate commanders. Delegating authority to them allows commanders to use their time for the more creative aspects of command, the art. Commanders delegate authority and set the level of their personal involvement in staff activities based on their assessment of the skill and experience of their subordinates. This assessment requires skilled judgment.

2-106. Within the headquarters, commanders exercise their judgment to determine when to intervene and participate personally in staff operations, as opposed to letting the staff operate on its own based on their guidance.

Commanders cannot do everything themselves or make every decision; such participation does not give staffs the experience mission command requires. However, commanders cannot simply "rubber stamp" staff products produced without their input. They participate in staff work where it is necessary to guide the staff. They use their situational understanding and commander's visualization to provide guidance from which the staff produces plans and orders. In deciding when and where to interact with subordinates, the key is for commanders to determine where they can best use their limited time to greatest effect—where their personal intervention will pay the greatest dividend.

HISTORICAL VIGNETTE—THE RUHR ENCIRCLEMENT

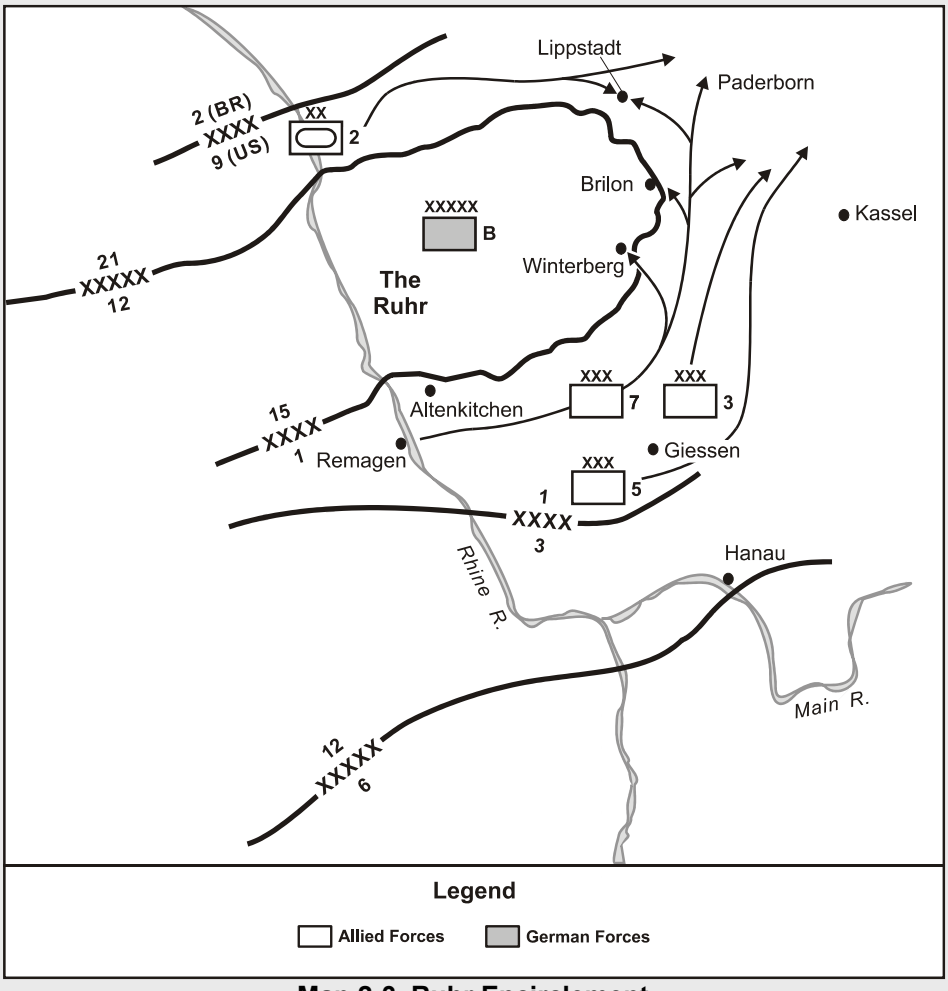
2-107. Army doctrine during World War II included many attributes of mission command. Subordinate commanders, guided by the overall operational plan and mission, were responsible for acting to accomplish the mission in the absence of, or when the situation was no longer covered by, orders. Personal conferences between commanders and subordinates ensured subordinates understood the overall plan. Commanders were to issue clear and concise orders and give subordinates freedom of action appropriate to their professional knowledge, the situation, their dependability, and the team play desired. Orders were to contain only such details or methods of execution necessary to ensure subordinate actions conformed to the overall plan.

Establishing and Using Commander's Intent— VII Corps and the Ruhr Encirclement

First Army's VII Corps, under MG J. Lawton Collins, entered action in Europe on 6 June 1944. Collins' staff served with him almost uninterruptedly before and through the campaign. This familiarity helped ensure that Collins' subordinates would understand and carry through his intent in issuing and executing their own orders. Collins' command techniques supported subordinates' exercise of initiative. He discussed his principal decisions, important enemy dispositions, and principal terrain features with major subordinate commanders. If he could not assemble these commanders, he visited them individually as time permitted, with priority given to the commander of the decisive operation. During operations, he visited major subordinate units to obtain information on enemy reactions and major difficulties encountered, again giving priority to units conducting the decisive operation. His general and special staff officers visited other units to report critical matters to the corps chief of staff. Upon returning to headquarters, Collins met with his staff to review the day's events and the changes he had directed. After that, the G-3 prepared and distributed a daily operations memorandum confirming Collins' oral instructions and adding any other information or instructions developed during the staff meeting. During the European campaign, VII Corps issued only 20 field orders, an average of two per month, to direct operations.

For the Ruhr encirclement, First Army's mission was to break out from its Rhine River bridgehead at Remagen, link up with Third Army in the Hanau-Giessen area, and join Ninth Army of 21st Army Group near Kassel-Paderborn. The attack began on 25 March 1945, with VII Corps attacking and passing through the enemy's main defensive positions. By this time, GA Dwight D. Eisenhower,

Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force, had decided to isolate the Ruhr from north and south by encirclement, the junction point being the Kassel-Paderborn area. On 26 March, VII Corps took Altenkirchen and, on 27 March, crossed the Dill River. First Army assigned VII Corps as the decisive operation for the linkup with Ninth Army at Paderborn. Collins had only 3d Armored Division (AD) and 104th Infantry Division (ID) available, and the objective was more than 100 kilometers away. Nevertheless, 3d AD, commanded by MG Maurice Rose, was directed to reach Paderborn in one day, and Rose, in turn, assigned his subordinates decisive and shaping operations to accomplish that mission. The decisive operation halted 25 kilometers short of Paderborn at 2200 on 29 March. The next day Rose was killed in action, as the Germans strongly defended Paderborn; 3d AD's lead elements were held 10 kilometers from the town. The corps received intelligence of German counterattack forces building around Winterberg, southwest of Paderborn. To counter this, 104th ID took the road junctions of Hallenberg, Medebach, and Brilon. First Army ordered III and V Corps to shield VII Corps from any attacks from outside the ring.



Map 2-3. Ruhr Encirclement

As the situation developed, Collins adapted the corps plan to his situational understanding, while remaining within the framework of the higher commander's

intent. By 31 March, German attacks against 104th ID, increasing German resistance around Paderborn, 3d AD's reorganization necessitated by Rose's death, and preparation of a coordinated attack against Paderborn required Collins to contact the Ninth Army commander and suggest a change in the linkup point. They agreed on the village of Lippstadt, halfway between Paderborn and the lead elements of 2d AD (the right-flank division of Ninth Army). The linkup was effected on 1 April, closing the Ruhr pocket. Collins personally led a task force from 3d AD, overcoming weak resistance in its push west, linking up with elements of 2d AD at 1530 at Lippstadt. Later that day, VII Corps successfully overcame the German defenses at Paderborn. The encirclement trapped Army Group B, including Field Marshal Model, 5th Panzer and 15th Armies, and parts of 1st Parachute Army, along with seven corps, 19 divisions, and antiaircraft and local defense troops—a total of nearly 350,000 soldiers. The reduction of the Ruhr pocket would take another two weeks.

The Ruhr had been selected as an objective even before the Allies landed in Europe. All major commanders appear to have understood this. However, 12th Army Group only gave the actual orders for the encirclement in late March 1945, when the success of First Army's breakout had become clear. The actual linkup was eventually effected between VII Corps and Ninth Army, principally on Collins' understanding of the higher commander's intent and initiative by his subordinates. He practiced a technique similar to mission orders, giving only one or two immediate objectives to each major subordinate command and a distant objective toward which to proceed, without specific instructions. This gave his subordinates freedom to act and exercise initiative, while still providing essential elements needed for coordination among the subunits. Knowing the overall commander's intent enabled commanders on both sides of the encirclement to direct efforts toward its fulfillment. When lack of lateral communications hindered coordination, subordinates took the initiative to accomplish the mission and fulfill the commander's intent as they understood it. At 3d AD, subordinates' understanding of the corps' commander's intent allowed operations to resume the day after Rose was killed. When the original objective, achieving a linkup at Paderborn, could no longer be accomplished, Collins proposed an alternative linkup point. Finally, with elements of his corps defending at Winterberg, attacking at Paderborn, and moving to Lippstadt, Collins positioned himself with the task force from 3d AD to make the linkup—the decisive operation that day for his corps, First Army, and 12th Army Group.

CONCLUSION

2-108. Ultimately command reflects everything the commander understands about the nature of war, warfighting doctrine, training, leadership, organizations, materiel, and soldiers. It is how commanders organize their forces, structure operations, and direct the synchronized effects of organic and allocated assets toward their visualized end state. Command is built on training and mutual understanding by all soldiers within that command about how it operates. It is the expression of the commander's professional competence and leadership style, and his translation of his vision to the command. However, command alone is not sufficient to translate that vision and to assure mission accomplishment; control, the subject of chapter 3, is also necessary.